

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5

1. A color-image forming device comprising:
a color-image forming unit for forming a color
image by superimposing a plurality of images
corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording
10 medium;
an automatic color-drift correction unit for
executing a correction of color drift generated during
the superimposition of the images; and
a color-drift correction execution interval
15 setting unit for variably setting color-drift correction
execution intervals, at which color-drift correction
execution intervals said automatic color-drift
correction executes the color-drift correction.

20

2. The device as claimed in claim 1, said
device further comprising:
25 a color-drift correction execution time

setting unit for setting a color-drift correction execution time, at which color-drift correction execution time said automatic color-drift correction starts the color-drift correction.

5

3. The device as claimed in claim 2, wherein:
10 said automatic color-drift correction is capable of executing the color-drift correction in a plurality of correction modes, which correction modes are different in time required for the color-drift correction according to precision of the color-drift
15 correction.

20 4. The device as claimed in claim 3, wherein:
 said automatic color-drift correction is capable of executing the color-drift correction in a first correction mode, which first correction mode requires a long time for achieving higher precision for
25 the color-drift correction, and in a second correction

mode, which second correction mode requires a less time for achieving reduced precision for the color-drift correction; and

 said automatic color-drift correction executes
5 the color-drift correction in the first correction mode
 at the previously set color-drift correction execution
 time and executes the color-drift correction in the
 second correction mode at times other than the
 previously set color-drift correction execution time.

10

5. The device as claimed in claim 4, said
15 device further comprising:

 a manual color-drift correction unit for
 executing the color-drift correction in the first
 correction mode at times other than the previously set
 color-drift correction execution time according to an
20 instruction from a user.

25

6. The device as claimed in claim 2, wherein:
said color-drift correction execution time
setting unit is capable of setting the color-drift
correction execution time on a day-of-the-week basis.

5

7. The device as claimed in claim 1, said
10 device further comprising:

a task interval measuring unit for measuring
intervals, at which intervals tasks are given to said
color-image forming device; wherein
said color-drift correction execution interval
15 setting unit sets the color-drift correction execution
intervals based on the measured result from said task
interval measuring unit.

20

8. The device as claimed in claim 2, said
device further comprising:

a task time measuring unit for measuring times,
25 at which times tasks are given to said color-image

forming device; wherein

 said color-drift correction execution time
 setting unit sets the color-drift correction execution
 time based on the measured result from said task time
5 measuring unit.

10 9. A color-image forming device comprising:
 a color-image forming unit for forming a color
 image by superimposing a plurality of images
 corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording
 medium;

15 an automatic color-drift correction unit for
 executing a correction of color drift generated during
 the superimposition of the images; and
 a color-drift correction cancellation unit for
 canceling the color-drift correction executed by said

20 automatic color-drift correction when an output of the
 color image is requested during the color-drift
 correction.

10. The device as claimed in claim 9, said device further comprising:

a priority setting unit for setting priority to the color-drift correction, whereby it is determined 5 whether or not the color-drift correction is cancelled when the output of the color image is requested during the color-drift correction.

10

11. A color-image forming device comprising:
a color-image forming unit for forming a color image by superimposing a plurality of images
15 corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording medium;
an automatic color-drift correction unit for executing a correction of color drift generated during the superimposition of the images; and
20 an image quality determination unit for determining whether image quality when an output of the color image is requested during the color-drift correction satisfies predetermined image quality;
wherein
25 when it is determined that the image quality

when the output of the color image is requested
satisfies the predetermined image quality, the color
image is provided; and when it is determined that the
image quality when the output of the color image is
5 requested does not satisfy the predetermined image
quality, the color image is provided after a warning is
given to a user.

10

12. The device as claimed in claim 11,
wherein:

the warning is given in the form of a lamp.

15

13. The device as claimed in claim 11,
20 wherein:

the warning is given on a display of a
computer, from which computer the output of the color
image is requested.

25

14. A color-image forming device comprising:
color-image forming means for forming a color
image by superimposing a plurality of images
corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording
5 medium;
automatic color-drift correction means for
executing a color-drift correction of color drift
generated during the superimposition of the images; and
color-drift correction execution interval
10 setting means for variably setting color-drift
correction execution intervals, at which color-drift
correction execution intervals said automatic color-
drift correction means executes the color-drift
correction.

15

15. The device as claimed in claim 14, said
20 device further comprising:
color-drift correction execution time setting
means for setting a color-drift correction execution
time, at which color-drift correction execution time
said automatic color-drift correction means starts the
25 color-drift correction.

16. The device as claimed in claim 15,
wherein:

5 said automatic color-drift correction means
are capable of executing the color-drift correction in a
plurality of correction modes, which correction modes
are different in time required for the color-drift
correction according to precision of the color-drift
correction.

10

17. The device as claimed in claim 16,
wherein:

15 said automatic color-drift correction means
are capable of executing the color-drift correction in a
first correction mode, which first correction mode
requires a long time for achieving higher precision for
the color-drift correction, and in a second correction
20 mode, which second correction mode requires a less time
for achieving reduced precision for the color-drift
correction; and

25 said automatic color-drift correction means
execute the color-drift correction in the first
correction mode at the previously set color-drift

correction execution time and execute the color-drift correction in the second correction mode at times other than the previously set color-drift correction execution time.

5

18. The device as claimed in claim 17, said
10 device further comprising:

15 manual color-drift correction means for
executing the color-drift correction in the first
correction mode at times other than the previously set
color-drift correction execution time according to an
instruction from a user.

20 19. The device as claimed in claim 15,
wherein:

25 said color-drift correction execution time
setting means are capable of setting the color-drift
correction execution time on a day-of-the-week basis.

25

20. The device as claimed in claim 14, said device further comprising:

task interval measuring means for measuring intervals, at which intervals tasks are given to said
5 color-image forming device; wherein

said color-drift correction execution interval setting means set the color-drift correction execution intervals based on the measured result from said task interval measuring means.

10

21. The device as claimed in claim 15, said
15 device further comprising:

task time measuring means for measuring times, at which times tasks are given to said color-image forming device; wherein

said color-drift correction execution time
20 setting means set the color-drift correction execution time based on the measured result from said task time measuring means.

25

22. A color-image forming device comprising:
color-image forming means for forming a color
image by superimposing a plurality of images
corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording
5 medium;
automatic color-drift correction means for
executing a correction of color drift generated during
the superimposition of the images; and
color-drift correction cancellation means for
10 canceling the color-drift correction executed by said
automatic color-drift correction means when an output of
the color image is requested during the color-drift
correction.

15

23. The device as claimed in claim 22, said
device further comprising:
20 priority setting means for setting priority to
the color-drift correction, whereby it is determined
whether or not the color-drift correction is cancelled
when the output of the color image is requested during
the color-drift correction.

25

24. A color-image forming device comprising:
color-image forming means for forming a color
image by superimposing a plurality of images
corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording
5 medium;
automatic color-drift correction means for
executing a color-drift correction of color drift
generated during the superimposition of the images; and
image quality determination means for
10 determining whether image quality when an output of the
color image is requested during the color-drift
correction satisfies predetermined image quality;
wherein
when it is determined that the image quality
15 when the output of the color image is requested
satisfies the predetermined image quality, the color
image is provided; and when it is determined that the
image quality when the output of the color image is
requested does not satisfy the predetermined image
20 quality, the color image is provided after a warning is
given to a user.

25. The device as claimed in claim 24,
wherein:

the warning is given in the form of a lamp.

5

26. The device as claimed in claim 24,
wherein:

10 the warning is given on a display of a
computer, from which computer the output of the color
image is requested.

15

27. A method for controlling color-drift
correction timing of a color-image forming device, said
method comprising the steps of:

20 forming a color image by superimposing a
plurality of images corresponding to a plurality of
colors onto a recording medium;

25 variably setting a color-drift correction
execution intervals, at which color-drift correction
execution intervals an automatic color-drift correction

unit executes a correction of color drift generated during the superimposition of the images; and
executing the color-drift correction by said automatic color-drift correction at the previously set
5 color-drift correction execution intervals.

10 28. The method as claimed in claim 27, said method further comprising the step of:

setting a color-drift correction execution time, at which color-drift correction execution time said automatic color-drift correction starts the color-
15 drift correction.

20 29. The method as claimed in claim 28, said method further comprising the step of:

executing the color-drift correction in a plurality of correction modes, which correction modes are different in time required for the color-drift
25 correction according to precision of the color-drift

correction.

5

30. The method as claimed in claim 29, said method further comprising the steps of:

executing the color-drift correction in a first correction mode, which first correction mode 10 requires a long time for achieving higher precision for the color-drift correction, at the previously set color-drift correction execution time; and

executing the color-drift correction in a second correction mode, which second correction mode 15 requires a less time for achieving reduced precision for the color-drift correction, at times other than the previously set color-drift correction execution time.

20

31. The method as claimed in claim 30, said method further comprising the step of:

manually executing the color-drift correction 25 in the first correction mode at times other than the

previously set color-drift correction execution time according to an instruction from a user.

5

32. The method as claimed in claim 28, said step of setting a color-drift correction execution time further comprising the step of setting the color-drift 10 correction execution time on a day-of-the-week basis.

15 33. The method as claimed in claim 27, said method further comprising the step of:

measuring intervals, at which intervals tasks are given to said color-image forming device; wherein said step of variably setting a color-drift 20 correction intervals further comprising the steps of: setting the color-drift correction execution intervals based on the measured interval.

25

34. The method as claimed in claim 28, said method further comprising the step of:

measuring times, at which times tasks are given to said color-image forming device; wherein

5 said step of setting a color-drift correction execution time further comprising the steps of:

setting the color-drift correction execution time based on the measured time.

10

35. A method for controlling color-drift correction timing of a color-image forming device, said 15 method comprising the steps of:

forming a color image by superimposing a plurality of images corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording medium;

executing a correction of color drift 20 generated during the superimposition of the images; and canceling the color-drift correction when an output of the color image is requested during the color-drift correction.

25

36. The method as claimed in claim 35, said method further comprising the step of:

setting priority to the color-drift correction, whereby it is determined whether or not the color-drift
5 correction is cancelled when the output of the color image is requested during the color-drift correction.

10

37. A method for controlling color-drift correction timing of a color-image forming device, said method comprising the steps of:

15 forming a color image by superimposing a plurality of images corresponding to a plurality of colors onto a recording medium;

executing a correction of color drift generated during the superimposition of the images;

20 determining whether image quality when the output of the color image is requested during the color-drift correction satisfies predetermined image quality;

25 providing the color image when it is determined that the image quality when an output of the color image is requested satisfies the predetermined image quality; and

providing the color image after a warning is given to a user when it is determined that the image quality when the output of the color image is requested does not satisfy the predetermined image quality.

5

38. The method as claimed in claim 37,
10 wherein:

the warning is given in the form of a lamp.

15

39. The method as claimed in claim 37,
wherein:

the warning is given on a display of a computer, from which computer the output is requested.

20